

Endless opportunities

Chrystal Hamlin, service leader Wanganui

Full of energy, dedication and passion, Chrystal Hamlin fits so comfortably with the Pathways culture.

At the age of 18, Chrystal was completing a business administration qualification when a family member working for Pathways encouraged her to apply for a role with the organisation. The mental health sector was completely new to Chrystal but she applied. Before she knew it she was part of the Pathways family and loved it! Twelve years later she's still part of the Pathways team! Why? Because she loves her job and the opportunities it offers.

Chrystal began working for Pathways on a casual basis, completing a nursing degree at the same time. After graduating Chrystal left Pathways and spent a year working at Wanganui Hospital. She enjoyed the challenges of the role but became frustrated with the lack of mental health resources at the time.

While Chrystal was working at the hospital, things began to change for Pathways. People using Pathways' services had traditionally been cared for in a residential environment, but the development of an enhanced mobile team would see a change. It would mean people could be supported in their own homes! When Pathways advertised for a registered health professional for the team, Chrystal jumped at the opportunity to return!

Chrystal soon became the team leader and in late 2008, when a new contract saw the team double in size, Chrystal became the service leader. A role she continues today.

So what does a typical day involve for Chrystal? She says there's no such thing! In fact, she often doesn't know what the day will hold until it happens. Always "in there with everything going on", Chrystal loves that she's not tied to one service. "I'm always involved in projects, getting contracts up and running, employing staff, getting things organised for respite, residential and mobile teams, educating, debriefing and providing formal support for staff...I've always got lots on the go!"

Over the years Chrystal has had opportunities to expand her study and career opportunities, work with a diverse range of people and have some fantastic experiences. "I love the variety of my role. I've mainly worked with the enhanced mobile team but having been with Pathways so long I know a lot so I'm often dragged into other things and I love that."

When asked what's kept her loving her job this long her answer's simple. "Pathways is so good to me and has always given me so many opportunities! I couldn't imagine working for anyone else. No other organisation would be the same!"